Embattled Aides Get Nixon's Reassurance

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KEY BISCAYNE, Fla, April 24—President Nixon had indirectly attempted to reassure his embattled aides of his conifdence in them pending what some administration sources said was an expected "big announcement" by Mr. Nixon in the Wategate case.

Deputy press secretary Gerald Warren said that on Sunday the President Telephoned White House counsel John Dean III, chief of staff H. R. Haldeman and domestic affairs adviser John Ehrlichman "to wish them well on Easter."

On Monday, Warren had declined to identify the persons whom the President had talked with by telephone from Key Biscayne. His statement here today was regarded by administration officials as a public showing that Mr. Nixon has not abandoned his top aides pending the outcome of the ongoing White House investigation in the Watergate case.

Warren also said that the President met for "about an hour" last Thursday with John J. Wilson, the attorney personally retained by Haldeman and by Ehrlichmann to represent them in the Watergate case.

Warren declined to answer a question about whether Wilson would represent the White House in any Watergate proceddings. Other administration officials said the Watergate issue had been thorroughly discussed by Wilson and the President during their meeting.

These same sources also predicted that a further annoucement on Watergate would be made by the President himself within the next few days and would be made from Washington.

Mr. Nixon flew back to the capital today after a five-day working holiday that included an overnight stay at Grand Cay in the Bahamas. When he wasn't relaxing with members of his family, Mr. Nixon spent most of the time in his office at the Florida White House working on the Watergate case and conferring by telephone with aides.

Neither Haldeman nor Ehrlichman accompanied Mr. Nixon to Florida. Both men returned to their White House offices today, Warren said, after spending the weekend at Camp David.

In their few public statements about the Watergate case, White House officials have attempted to minimize various reports about widespread feuding among staff aides.

On several occasins today Warren emphasized that there was "no change in status" of any White House staff members. He declined to answer a question about whether any of these staff members had submitted their resignations.

Asked whether the President had made any progress on investigating the Watergate matter, Warren replied:

"It would be inappropriate for me to try to assess or give details of the President's investigation into this matter. The President is spending time on the matter. He has outlined his views to you. He has said that he seeks the truth and he will not condone a coverup, so it would be inappropriate for me to try to give you an assessment of the situation."